

COMMUNICATION STYLE

Oleh: Rosaly Franksiska

Abstract

Komunikasi yang efektif terjadi ketika seseorang yang menerima informasi memiliki pemahaman yang sama dengan yang mengirimkannya. Kemampuan komunikasi seseorang dapat meningkatkan produktivitas individu maupun kelompok. Komunikasi juga memiliki fungsi kontrol, fungsi memotivasi, fungsi untuk mengekspresikan perasaan, dan emosi, juga sebagai alat informasi. Setiap orang memiliki kecenderungan terhadap gaya komunikasi tertentu. Kecenderungan terhadap gaya komunikasi tersebut dipengaruhi oleh perpaduan antara hereditas dan faktor lingkungan seseorang. Gaya komunikasi adalah kombinasi dari berbagai komponen, seperti pola suara, gerak mata, ekspresi wajah. Agar dapat berkomunikasi dengan baik, gaya komunikasi kita harus fleksible, disesuaikan dengan situasi dan gaya komunikasi orang yang kita ajak bicara.

COMMUNICATION

Communication according to Courtland L. Bovee and John V. Thill (2000:4) is a process of delivering and accepting messages. An effective communication happens when a person receiving the information has the same understanding as the one who sends them, and it causes a new way of thinking.

A person's ability to communicate well, can increase productivity, individual productivity as well as team productivity. It also increases understanding and ability to respond better to needs and wants of claimants and stakeholders.

If a person wants to be a good communicator, there are some key elements that go into being a good communicator. Most importantly, you must take a sincere interest in what others have to say, regardless if you find the information boring or irrelevant.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION

Communication has four main functions in an organization (Jennifer M. George dan Gareth R. Jones, 1998:433; Stephen P. Robbins, 2000: 117), they are *controlling, motivating organizational members, expressing feelings and emotions, providing information.*

Communication acts as a behavior control of its members. For example, organization has hierarchy authority and formal guidelines, where every members of organization should follow. These activities show the function of communication as control and coordination among person, when an employee was asked to give complaint to his/her supervisor, and was asked to follow given job description, and also to follow organization's regulations.

Communication motivates employee by clarifying activities that should be done by employees, telling employees to what extent they have to work, and what can be done to increase their performance, to create specific goals, to have feedback. Generally, communication can force down certain activities to stimulate motivation.

Many employees assume that their working environment is their main sources for social interaction, where each and every one of them can show how frustrated they are and how satisfied they are. Communication of feelings and emotions can help members of organization to understand one another, and when people understand one another they can work and achieve goals better.

The last function of communication is its role in providing information. Communication provides information that can be used by person and also team to make decision.

Those functions mentioned earlier does not have any function that are more important than others, because those four functions are intertwined and support each other.

COMMUNICATION STYLE

Every person has a tendency toward certain communication style, and that tendency can sometimes make that person does not realize other people's communication style. Our communication style develops during the couple of first years of our life. It is a combination of hereditary and environmental factors, and each person create their habit based on behaviors bear down on them when they grow up. That communication habit is what we call communication style. Our communication style is a combination of many components, like voice patterns, eye movements, facial expression and posture. The patterns of behavior that we observe in other people are called behavioral- or communication style. Communication is also the way of thinking and behaving and is rather a style than an ability. By style it is meant the way how someone likes to do something. An ability refers to how well someone can do something.

We all have aspects of style within us. Some of us can easily move from one style to another and adapt our style to the needs of situation at hand. Communication styles follow certain pattern. Hippocrates and later Galen determined there were four pattern called "four basic temperaments" (Kathy Jordain, 2004), as follows:

- The sanguine person, characterized by the tendency to be overly cheerful, optimistic, vain, and unpredictable.
- The phlegmatic person, who is unemotional, nonchalant, cool, persevering, and needing direction.
- The melancholic person, who is soft hearted, oriented toward doing things for others, and is slow in responding.
- The choleric person whose temperament is domineering, stubborn, opinionated, and self-confident.

These descriptions were developed many years ago, and are still somewhat suitable, although in today's world, people translate into four communication styles.

The expressive or spirited style of communication correspond to sanguine person. They invest a lot of emotion and energy in their communication and often speak quickly, putting their whole body into it. They are easily sidetracked onto a story that may or may not illustrate the point they are trying to make. Because of their enthusiasm they are great team motivators. They are concerned about people and relationships. Their high levels of energy can come on strong at times and their focus is usually on the bigger picture, which means they sometimes miss the details. These people find conflict or difference of opinion invigorating.

The technical or systematic communication style correspond to phlegmatic person. They focuses on facts and technical details, and their focus is very much on the task, not on the people, emotions, or concern. People with this style think the facts should speak for themselves, and they are not very comfortable with conflict. They need time to adapt to change and need to understand both the logic of it and the steps involved.

Considerate and sympathetic communication style correspond to melancholic person. A person with this communication style is focused on people and relationships. They are good listeners, and they always try to make sure that everyone is comfortable. They do not like conflict. They feel very uneasy about change and threats.

Direct and bold communication style correspond to choleric person. People with this style are brief in their communication and they focused on tasks and outcomes. They are big picture thinkers and love to be involved in many things at once. Because they are so direct, they often seem forceful and can be very intimidating to others. They also thrive for change.

Communication style of person is determined by that person's position on two scales. The vertical scale appointed the degree to which a person's relationships are open or reserved. The horizontal scales appointed that person's level of directness. It is important to understand how these scales work. It is possible to adjust your communications to fall into any category you want. Figure 1, however, should help people understand better where their most comfortable style lies.

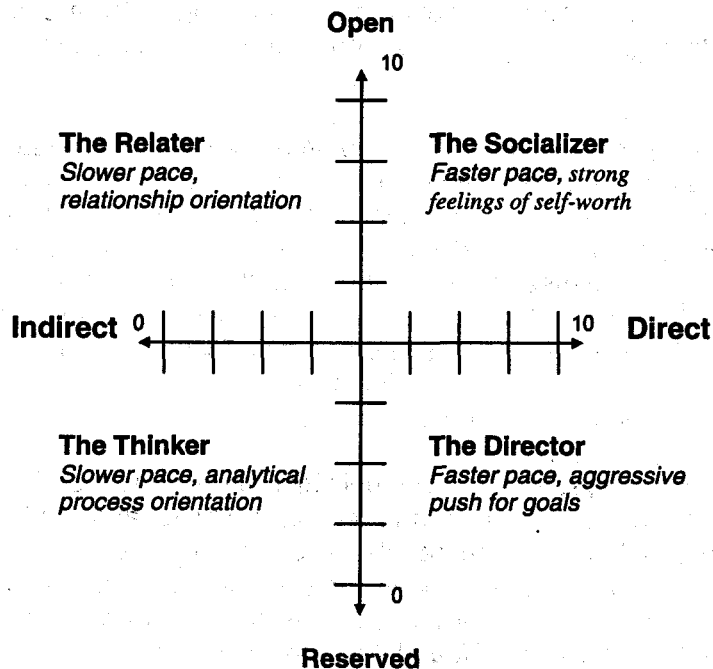


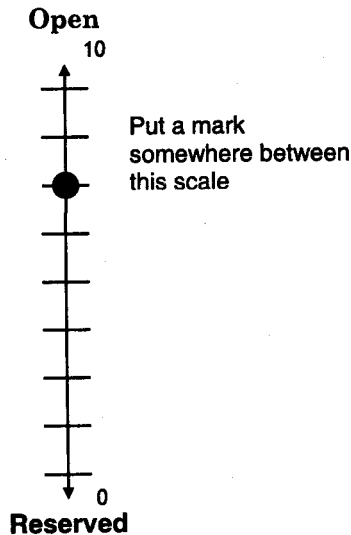
Figure 1. Communication Scale (David G. Jensen, 2000)

People can find out about their communication style, by answering these following questions (David G. Jensen, 2000).

- Are you open or reserved?

An open person is one who readily expresses emotions, thoughts, and feelings without holding back in any way. They are so easy to understand that, to a more reserved person, it can come shocking. An open person doesn't hesitate to tell you some of their most private feelings and experiences even in an early conversation. They use a lot of eye contact and expression to communicate. Establishing good interpersonal relationships is a high priority to them.

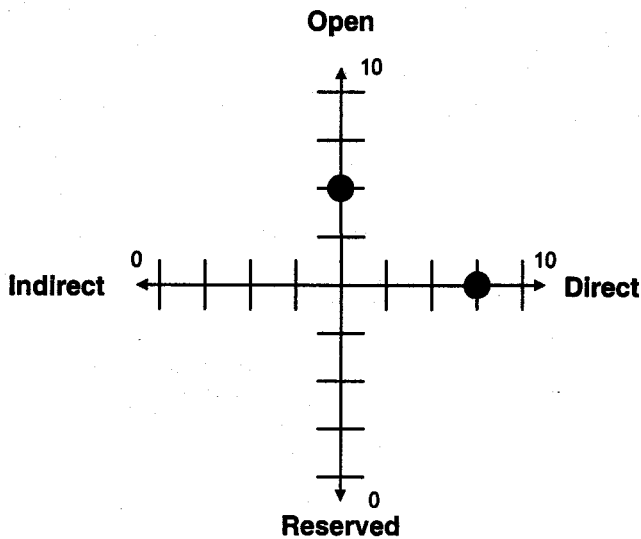
A reserved person takes a while to get to know. This person tends to hold back on disclosing anything about them. They seem to be most comfortable when keeping a certain distance in their interpersonal relationships. Everyone falls somewhere on the scale between open and reserved. Decide where you fit on this scale and place a mark at that point.



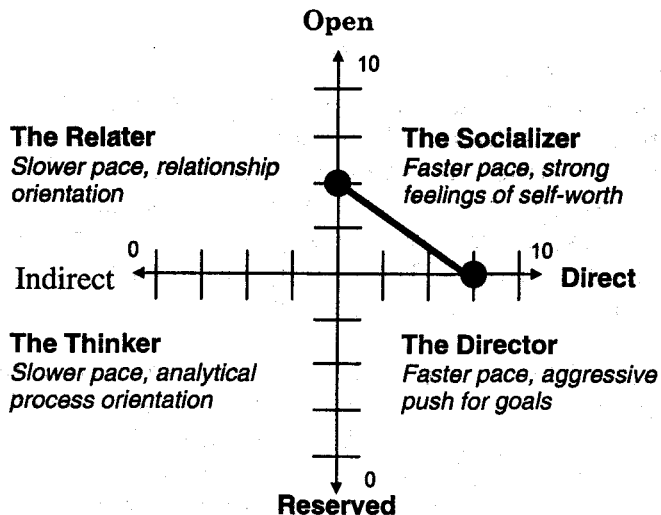
Are you direct or indirect?

The horizontal scale indicates how people relate to the circumstances in which they find themselves, and whether they are likely to forge ahead or seek security. An indirect person is slow-paced and security conscious. They are less confronting and likely to prefer a conversation with a good friend. Those people are generally able to provide very accurate, carefully thought-out results. They are usually the last ones to engage in any kind of politics or to seek competition.

A direct person is fast-paced and assertive. An indirect person often perceives them as competitive and controlling. In a meeting, a direct person will likely make emphatic points and speak about problems clearly probably also speak a bit louder than the others in the meeting. They are sometimes quite argumentative, and typically maintain their position in an argument far longer than most people would. Place a mark between this horizontal scale.



Draw a line between the two marks, you will find that the line passes through one of the quadrants that describe four behavioral style categories; the relater, the socializer, the thinker, and the director. The quadrant that your line passes through is the category into which you fall. The people whom you work with, however, may see you little differently than you see yourself.



Another way to find out about a person's communication is by answering these questions below. This is an informal survey, taken from *The Platinum Rule* by Tony Alessandra, Ph.D. and Michael J. O'Connor Ph.D. New York, New York, Warner Brooks 1996 (Philip L. Hunsaker, 2001) designed to determine how you usually act in everyday related situations. The idea is to get a clear description of how you see yourself.

To answer, please choose A or B in each pair of statements below, which shows the one that MOST, describes you.

1. A) I'm usually open to getting to know people personally and establishing relationships with them.
B) I'm not usually open to getting to know people personally and establishing relationships with them.
2. A) I usually react slowly and deliberately.
B) I usually react quickly and spontaneously.
3. A) I'm usually guarded about other people's use of my time.
B) I'm usually open to other people's use of my time.
4. A) I usually introduce myself at social gatherings.
B) I usually wait for others to introduce themselves to me at social gatherings.
5. A) I usually focus my conversations on the interests of the people involved, even if that means straying from the business or subject at hand.
B) I usually focus my conversations on the tasks, issues, business, or subject at hand.
6. A) I'm usually not assertive, and I can be patient with a slow pace.
B) I'm usually assertive, and at times I can be impatient with a slow pace.
7. A) I usually make decisions based on facts or evidence.
B) I usually make decisions based on feelings, experiences or relationships.
8. A) I usually contribute frequently to group conversations.
B) I usually contribute infrequently to group conversations.
9. A) I usually prefer to work with and through others, providing support when possible.
B) I usually prefer to work independently or dictate the conditions in terms of how others are involved.
10. A) I usually ask questions or speak tentatively and indirectly.
B) I usually make empathic statements or directly expressed opinions.
11. A) I usually focus primarily on ideas, concepts, or results.
B) I usually focus primarily on persons, interactions, and feelings.
12. A) I usually use gestures, facial expression, and voice intonations to emphasize points.
B) I usually do not use gestures, facial expressions, and voice intonations to emphasize points.
13. A) I usually accept others' points of view (ideas, feelings, and concerns).
B) I usually don't accept others' points of view (ideas, feelings, and concerns)

14. A) I usually respond to risk and change in a cautious or predictable manner.
 B) I usually respond to risk and change in dynamic or unpredictable manner.
15. A) I usually prefer to keep personal feelings and thoughts private, sharing only when I wish to do so.
 B) I usually find it natural and easy to share and discuss my feelings with others.
16. A) I usually seek out new or different experiences and situations.
 B) I usually choose known or similar situations and relationships.
17. A) I'm usually responsive to others' agendas, interests, and concerns.
 B) I'm usually directed toward my own agendas, interests and concerns.
18. A) I usually respond to conflict slowly and indirectly.
 B) I usually respond to conflict quickly and directly.

This answer sheet will help you score you mark. Circle A or B for each pair of statements correspond to your answer.

O	G	D	I
1A	1B	2B	2A
3B	3A	4A	4B
5A	5B	6B	6A
7B	7A	8A	8B
9A	9B	10B	10A
11B	11A	12A	12B
13A	13B	14B	14A
15B	15A	16A	16B
17A	17B	18B	18A

Totals _____

Total the numbers of items circled in each column (O, G, D, I) and write it on the spaces above. Now, compare the "O" column with the "G" column, which one has the highest total - O or G. Do the same with D and I, which one has the highest total D or I. If G and D that score the highest, that means you tend toward being a **Controller/Director**. If O and D that score the highest, you tend toward **Promoter/Socializer**. If O and I, **Supporter/Relater**. If G and I, you are **Analyzer/Thinker**.

The Supporter/Relater

A person with this style is exceptionally easy to work with, very cooperative. You can spot a person with this style in a working environment by the presence of personal items: photos, plants, and objects that can create an informal atmosphere. As a team leader, a relater seems more concerned about feelings of the people involved than the task itself. When communicating with a relater remember to keep bringing the conversation back to the real issue, and remember not to be pushy or aggressive.

These are most likely to be the characteristics of a relater: 1) Values acceptance and stability in circumstances, 2) Slow with big decisions; dislikes change, 3) Builds networks of friends to help do work, 4) Good listener; timid about voicing contrary opinions; concerned for others' feelings, 5) Easy-going; likes slow, steady pace, 6) Friendly & sensitive; no person in unlovable, 7) Relationship Oriented.

The Promotor/Socializer

A person with this style is fun, always a bit playful. Their general interests run toward interacting with others rather than become a loner. They will literally run out of the office if caught up in some boring task, or if by chance they end up being alone. They usually quite talkative, but works well with others, and quite quickly too. Although, they may shift from one activity to another more often than the manager prefers. When communicating with a socializer, remember their need for personal prestige and for acceptance. These people tend to make decision spontaneously, based on what they or others think as intuition.

These are most likely to be the characteristics of a socializer: 1) Entertainer, 2) Values enjoyment and helping others with the same, 3) Full of ideas and impulsive in trying them, 4) Wants working to be fun for everyone, 5) Talkative and open about self; asks others' opinions; loves to brainstorm, 6) Flexible; easily bored with routine. 7) Intuitive, creative, spontaneous, flamboyant approach. 8) Optimist; nothing is beyond hope, 9) Celebration Oriented.

The Analyzer/Thinker

Thinkers see themselves as efficient, precise, and thorough. Their working space usually very neat and structured. They have thoroughly analytical approach to their work, and they prefer to solve problems at a slow, cautious pace. They are typically computer oriented and enjoy getting the data into shape on their terminals, which others perceive as too much reliance on computer, that make them "slow in adapting" changes in decisions. Effective communicating with thinkers, should take slower pace, with a good ideal emphasis on proof. Approaching this person with changes should be accompanied with facts and data supporting the changes.

These are most likely to be the characteristics of a thinker: 1) Assessor, 2) Values accuracy in details & being right, 3) Plans thoroughly before deciding to act, 4) Prefers to work alone, 5) Introverted; quick to think and slow to speak; closed about personal matters, 6) Highly organized; even plans spontaneity, 7) Cautious, logical, thrifty approach, 8) Thoughtful; no problem is too big to ponder, 9) Idea Oriented.

The Controller/Director

Directors are best known as aggressive person and competitive in nature. This style prefers to have the quite corner office. The director is the person in an organization who can be depended on to get results, but may be criticized for having too little concern about the effect of those results on the feelings of others. They are very independent. Communicating with director is best done at quick pace, with emphasis on getting right to the point. Always see things from their viewpoint, avoid chitchat.

These are most likely to be the characteristics of a director: 1) Commander, 2) Values getting the job done, 3) Decisive risk taker, 4) Good at delegating work to others, 5) Not shy but private about personal matters; comes on strong in conversation, 6) Likes to be where the action is, 7) Take charge, enterprising, competitive, efficient approach, 8) Fearless; no obstacle is too big to tackle, 9) Results Oriented.

Those four categories mentioned above are not representative of personality, but merely an indication of our preferred method of communication. People often think that one of the four characteristics is better and more favorable than the other, but the truth is that there is no best style, because there is no best type of personality. Often people use different styles in different situations and in different relationships.

Conclusion

Most communication expert will tell you to fine-tune your approach to the behavioral style of the person you are talking with. That rule is not necessarily the best approach to effective communication. If we treat everyone else as we would like to be treated, we may be effective only with others who share our behavioral style. Making a few adjustments in your own style to suit each specific situation can dramatically improve a communication. We all have the ability to develop flexibility in our styles. The greater the flexibility we have, the more skilled we usually are at handling possible and actual conflicts. Usually it has to be relevant to us to do so, either because we think it is important or because there are incentives in our environment to encourage it. The key is that we have to become flexible with our communication style.

References :

Bovee, Courtland L. and John V. Thill. (2000). 6th Edition. *Business Communication Today*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

George, Jennifer M. and Gareth R. Jones. (2002). 3rd Edition. *Understanding and Managing Organizational Behavior*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Hunsaker, Philip L. (2001). *Training in Management Skills*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Communication Style Inventory

<http://occonline.occ.cccd.edu/online/klee/CommunicationsStyleInventory.pdf>.

Jensen, David G. (2004). *Communication Skills for Leaders (Part Two)*

<http://careers.the-scientist.com/>

Jensen, David G. (2000). *Communication Styles*

http://www.kellyglobal.net/eprise/main/web/us/smi/en/candidates_career_dev_commun_styles

Jordain, Kathy. (2004). *Communication Styles and Conflict*.

http://www.teamchrysalis.com/AC/V4/AC46_Communication_Styles.htm